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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006642

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [OSCE](#) [AZ](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA CLARIFIES POSITION ON AZERBAIJAN
ELECTIONS

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Charles O. Blaha for reasons
1.4 (b,d).

1. (C) Following a weak initial MFA statement and amid press reports that Turkish observers found no irregularities during the November 6 Azerbaijan elections, MFA Director General Halil Akinci clarified the Turkish position during a November 9 meeting with visiting Senior Advisor for Eurasia Steven Mann. Akinci explained that unofficial Turkish observers, mostly parliamentarians from the ruling AKP as well as opposition parties who had been invited to monitor the elections by the GOAZ, declared the elections faultless. On the contrary, the 50 short term and 2 long term observers sent by Turkey to participate in the ODIHR observation mission found widespread fraud, especially in Nakhichevan, before and during the elections. Akinci said that, based on ODIHR's observations, the MFA fears the elections will not contribute to forging a national consensus within Azerbaijan.

2. (C) Akinci added that the MFA has come under political pressure from the parliamentary observers and their allies, who are accusing the Turkish observers accredited to ODIHR, and by extension the MFA itself, of "serving foreign interests" by criticizing the conduct of the elections. Nevertheless, the MFA issued a second statement on November 9 that refers to the findings of the ODIHR observation mission, notes the irregularities observed, and calls on the GOAZ to take corrective measures.

3. (C) Comment. The schizophrenic Turkish response to the elections illustrates the fear on the part of diverse segments of the Turkish political community that rocking the Azeri boat will jeopardize regional stability as well as lucrative commercial relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Turkish nationalists, who view Azerbaijan as part of a greater pan-Turkic nation, are ideologically resistant to any criticism of a "brotherly" Turkic country. End Comment.

4. (U) Ambassador Mann was unable to clear this message before departing.
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